

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of controlling call admission within a system including a plurality of media gateways interconnected by a packet switched backbone, the method comprising the steps of:

monitoring the level of congestion suffered by incoming packets for a first gateway wherein said incoming packets are transmitted from a group of media gateways over said backbone and wherein said first media gateway acting as a terminating media gateway for said group of media gateways and wherein said group of media gateways are identified by a specific subnet mask of said packet switched backbone; and

receiving a request for said first media gateway to terminate a new bearer connection extending over said backbone from a second media gateway within said group of media gateways,

making a decision on the admissibility of that request based upon the previously monitored level of congestion suffered by said first media gateway for said incoming packets from said second media gateway or from said group of media gateways; and

rejecting or accepting said request for said new bearer connection based on said admission decision.

2. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of monitoring the level of congestion suffered by said incoming packets for said first media gateway comprises the step of:

examining said incoming packets received at said first media gateway to determine whether or not they contain a congestion notification flag.

3. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of monitoring the level of congestion suffered by said incoming packets for said first media gateway comprises the step of:

monitoring the rate at which incoming packets are dropped.

4. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 3, further comprising the steps of:

monitoring the rate at which incoming packets are dropped by the backbone and

examining said incoming packets received at said first media gateway to determine whether or not said incoming packets contain a congestion notification flag.

5. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of monitoring the level of congestion suffered by said incoming packets for said first media gateway comprises the step of:

associating incoming packets or packet sequences with an originating gateway based upon source addresses or parts of source addresses.

6. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said packet switched backbone is an Internet Protocol (IP) backbone.

7. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said step of making said decision on the admissibility of said request is made at said first media gateway.

8. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said step of making the decision on the admissibility of said request is made at a media gateway controller controlling said first media gateway and said monitored congestion levels are signalled to the media gateway controller by the first media gateway.

9. (Previously Presented) A media gateway arranged to control call admission within a system including a plurality of media gateways interconnected by a packet switched backbone, the media gateway comprising:

means for monitoring the level of congestion suffered by incoming packets to that gateway from other media gateways over said backbone wherein said gateway acting as a terminating media gateway for said other media gateways and wherein said other media gateways are identified by a specific subnet mask of said packet switched backbone;

means for receiving a request for that media gateway to terminate a new bearer connection extending over said backbone from a requesting media gateway within said other media gateways;

means coupled to the monitoring means and the receiving means for making a decision on the admissibility of that request based upon the previously monitored level of congestion suffered by said incoming packets transmitted from said requesting media gateway or from said other media gateways containing said requesting media gateway;

means for rejecting or accepting said request for said new bearer connection based on said admission decision.

10. (Previously Presented) A media gateway controller arranged to control call admission within a system including a plurality of media gateways interconnected by a packet switched backbone, the media gateway controller comprising:

an interface towards a first media gateway;

means for receiving monitored congestion levels from said first media gateway, the monitored congestion levels being indicative of the congestion suffered by incoming packets to said first media gateway from other media gateways over said backbone wherein said first media gateway acting as a terminating media gateway for said other media gateways and wherein said other media gateways are identified by a specific subnet mask of said packet switched backbone;

means for receiving a call request requiring that said first media gateway terminate a new bearer connection extending over said backbone from a second media gateway within said other media gateways;

means for making a decision on the admissibility of that request based upon the congestion level suffered by said incoming packets for said first media gateway from said second media gateway or from said other media gateways; and

means for rejecting or accepting said request for said new bearer connection based on said decision.

11 – 12. (Canceled)

13. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program product for controlling call admission within a communication system including a plurality of media gateways interconnected by a packet switched backbone, the computer program product performs the following steps when run on a processor:

monitoring the level of congestion suffered by incoming packets for a first media gateway wherein said incoming packets are transmitted from other media gateways over said backbone and wherein said first media gateway acting as a terminating media gateway for said other media gateways and wherein said other media gateways are identified by a specific subnet mask of said packet switched backbone; and

receiving a request for said first media gateway to terminate a new bearer connection extending over said backbone from a second media gateway within said other media gateways,

making a decision on the admissibility of that request based upon the previously monitored level of congestion suffered by said first media gateway for said incoming packets from said second media gateway or from said other media gateways containing the second media gateway.

14. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 13, wherein the instructions for monitoring the level of congestion suffered by said incoming packets for said first media gateway further comprises instructions for examining said incoming packets received at that first media gateway to determine whether or not they contain a congestion notification flag.

15. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 13, wherein the instructions for monitoring the level of congestion suffered by said incoming packets for said first media gateway further comprise instructions for monitoring the rate at which packets are dropped.

16. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 13, wherein the instructions for monitoring the level of congestion suffered by said incoming packets for said first media gateway further comprise instructions for monitoring the rate at which packets are dropped by the backbone and examining said incoming packets received at the first media gateway to determine whether or not said incoming packets contain a congestion notification flag.

17. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 13, wherein the instructions for monitoring the level of congestion suffered by said incoming packets for said first media gateway comprises instructions for associating incoming packets or packet sequences with an originating gateway based upon source addresses or parts of source addresses.

18. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 13, wherein said packet switched backbone is an Internet Protocol (IP) backbone.

19. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 13, wherein said instructions for making said decision on the admissibility of said

request for said first media gateway to terminate said new bearer connection, is made at the first media gateway.

20. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 13, wherein said instructions for making the decision on the admissibility of said request for said first media gateway to terminate said new bearer connection is made at a media gateway controller controlling said first media gateway, and said monitored congestion levels are signaled to the media gateway controller by the first media gateway.

21. (New) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

in response to detecting the level of congestion suffered by incoming packets exceeds a predetermined threshold, starting a congestion timer; and

in response to receiving a subsequent indication of congestion, restarting said congestion timer; and

in response to receiving a subsequent request for said first media gateway to terminate said new bearer connection, rejecting the subsequent request before expiry of said congestion timer.